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Viewing cable 08ASUNCION665, INSIDE SCOOP ON REGIONAL POLITICS AND UNASUR

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08ASUNCION665**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08ASUNCION665	2008-09-25 20:06	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Asuncion

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.abc.com.py/nota/cree-que-evo-morales-padece-de-complejo-racial-segun-cable-de-wikileaks>

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAC #0665 2692006
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 252006Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7277
INFO RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 0634
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 3209
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0384
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 3119
RHEHNCS/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RHMFIISS/USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 000665

SIPDIS

WHA/FO CMCMULLEN, WHA/BSC MDRUCKER, BFRIEDMAN, MDASCHBACH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2028

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PA](#)

SUBJECT: INSIDE SCOOP ON REGIONAL POLITICS AND UNASUR

¶1. (C) Chilean Ambassador Fabio Vio Ugarte told Ambassador September 17 that he met privately with Chilean President Bachelet when he returned to Santiago for a COM meeting to prepare for the UNASUR Summit. To his surprise, she firmly stated her dislike for Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. However, he said, Bachelet is under great internal pressure from pro-Chavez members of her administration who want her to publicly support Chavez. She is also being criticized domestically for not doing enough for Chile's neighbors and focusing too much on commercial allies in Asia, the United States, and Europe. Bachelet saw the UNASUR meeting for the Bolivia conflict as Chile's chance to get involved in a constructive way in the region. (NOTE: Vio was Ambassador to Venezuela during the Lagos administration but was recalled for consultations for three months as a result of tense relations between Venezuela and Chile. He is strongly anti-Chavez and considers himself close to Lagos and Frey but does not know Bachelet; Vio was concerned about where Bachelet could take Chile's relationship with Chavez given her leftist origins. END NOTE).

¶2. (C) Vio told the Ambassador that he spoke with President Lugo's Chief of Staff, Miguel Angel Lopez Perito, and Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) Senator Alberto Grillon (chair of the Paraguayan Senate Foreign Affairs Committee) the day before they traveled with Lugo to Chile. Vio stressed the need to keep the United States out of the UNASUR declaration; all agreed that the UNASUR declaration should not be anti-U.S. Vio said Lugo held that line during the UNASUR meeting, and that Chilean MFA staff were relieved that UNASUR agreed on a declaration given the high risk associated with the meeting.

¶3. (C) Ambassador met separately with Senator Grillon September 18 upon his return from Chile. Grillon said Colombian President Uribe played a key role in moderating UNASUR discussions about Bolivia, and that Argentine President Kirchner and Brazilian President Lula (who does not want the Venezuela/Bolivia issue to spill over into Brazil) were also "helpful." Grillon said Chavez gave a long-winded speech attacking the United States -- to the annoyance of most of the other heads of state -- and that only Bolivian President Morales echoed his rhetoric. Grillon said Morales spoke disparagingly about Ambassador Goldberg, alleging that he contributed to the crisis because of his meetings with the opposition and "interference." Lugo's participation was limited, but his interventions moderate, according to Grillon. Sen. Grillon overhead one of Chavez' advisors press Lopez Perito not to accept President Bush's invitation for a White House meeting with Lugo. The Venezuelan advisor aggressively tried to convince Lopez Perito that the Bush/Lugo visit should not take place. Lopez Perito disagreed.

¶4. (C) President Lugo told the Ambassador September 19 that he wants to talk to all sides in the Bolivian conflict, and that he has reached out to the political opposition in Bolivia directly. He confided in the Ambassador, saying that he believes Morales "has a complex" about race and dismissing Chavez' recent rhetoric. COMMENT: Lugo continues to walk a fine, pragmatic line on regional politics. In the press, he has been very balanced on the Bolivia crisis, supporting Morales as Bolivia's democratically elected president but avoiding any mention of the United States. On September 24, Lugo publicly stated that he will not expel any ambassadors from Paraguay, including the current U.S. Ambassador. Simultaneously he stated that "Lugo is not Hugo Chavez and Hugo Chavez is not Lugo, thank God." END COMMENT.